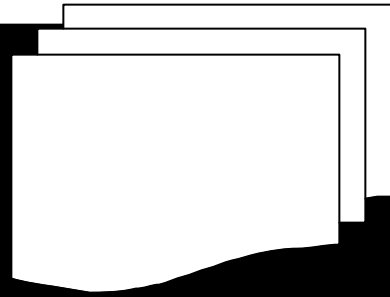


the physical disability FILE



information for and about people with physical disabilities

Preparing for Emergencies

People with disabilities, perhaps more than others, need to prepare for emergencies such as a fire, a tornado or a blizzard. This became particularly apparent after the September 11 terrorist attacks. People with disabilities who lived near the disaster sites were affected by power outages, blocked streets, no access to transportation, and personal care assistants who couldn't reach them.

Some people with disabilities at “ground zero” in the World Trade Center survived because they, their employers and their co-workers assured that evacuation plans and equipment were in place and utilized. Others were not so lucky, however, being stranded because there was no plan, no equipment.

Disaster Preparedness for People with Disabilities is published by the American Red Cross to encourage individuals to think about the unexpected. It presents a step-by-step planning tool that asks people with disabilities to consider questions like the following.

- Have you identified accessible exits you can use in emergencies at home or at work?
- Do you have a kit of disability-related supplies and medications in case your usual source of products is interrupted during an emergency?
- Have you considered how you will care for a service animal if you have one?
- Do you have a written list of disability-related medical needs to inform rescue workers if you are unconscious?
- Have you identified an alternative place to stay if you are told to leave your home during a disaster?
- Do you have a whistle or noisemaker to alert rescuers if you are unable to communicate verbally?

You can obtain a copy of *Disaster Preparedness* from your local chapter of the Red Cross, or you can read it on the internet at: www.redcross.org. Emergency planning information also is available on the web site of the National Organization of Disability at: www.nod.org.